

The Russian Strategic and Operational Concept of a so-called
Alpine Front.

The hitherto general opinion about a possible military conflict between East and West has been, that the USA would make war in Europe, first of all, by means of air force. For this purpose only the British Isles, the Iberian Peninsula, Southern Italy, Greece, Turkey and the Middle East had to be held as air bases. The rest of Europe would be left at first to the Soviets, until this area could be delivered from the Western Block power by an efficient air offensive, carried out with the most modern bombing outfit, and followed by the night combat by an invasion of the land around Berlin. In this way a basis would be created for fighting out the final decision in Russian Asia.

There is no doubt, this strategic conception contains a few fatal mistakes. The invasion in 1944 was carried out by a first air adversary, very much weakened by battle, and whose allies could hardly cope with the military strength of this second. Very strong forces have been bound by the Russian and Italian Front. This wouldn't be so in the first phase of a war against the Soviets, even if large scale amphibian landing, maneuvers of the Western Allies should be made. The Russian is ill-prepared.

FOR COORDINATION WITH Army

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of their country, thus enabling millions of Russians to do service at the front.

The coming war will certainly be determined, in a further degree than the last one, by groups of partisans and means of resistance organizations. As anybody knows, resistance movements can't be set into operation from one day to the other, not at all under Soviet occupation rule, which would suppress in the very beginning any such attempt. (This doesn't mean however, that one couldn't build up Underground Organizations also under Russian rule) An evacuation of central Western Europe by the American and British troops without any serious resistance, would mean at next in the public opinion the thesis of Russian invincibility is a matter of fact. The international effect upon the whole world would be immense. The bulk of the European population would at first keep quiet; a not unconsiderable number of persons in every occupied country would collaborate with the Russians and the presumable activists would have been put aside by the Soviets, as pointed out above.

The Anglo-American retreat would be considered as leaving Europe in the lurch, and the psychological effect produced by this fact shouldn't be neglected. Moreover, air-raids against the Red Army, particularly when they are started during an invasion, would hit first the population of the evacuated countries.

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of these conditions, so disadvantageous to the Western powers.
It must not be that the Russian Army pushed forward in all stages
as far as the Atlantic coast and that no decisive resistance
be offered before the Pyrenees. The best section to stop the Russian
attack would probably be the Rhine. Considering the heavy su-
periority of the Western States' ground forces, the American and
French troops in Western Germany and Austria will not be able
to offer any lasting resistance (apart from delaying fighting
on the Weser, the upper course of the Danube, the Inn, the Salz-
zach, or in the Black Forest) before the Rhine line.
There may be objected to the conception, ~~that~~ "the Rhine forms a
natural resisting line", that crossings of such a stream can be
made at every time, when they are carefully prepared. The crossing
of the Rhine by the Germans in 1940, and by the Western Allies in
1945 may be quoted here. But this objection is but partially founded.

in both these crossings have been carried out under an entirely different circumstances. In both cases the defender couldn't make efficient use of his Air Force, but this probably wasn't of the same bearing as the fact that the crossings have been carried out with a defenceless Southern flank (Switzerland having been neutral at this time). The strategic consequences would be completely different and incomparably better for the Western Allies when these circumstances should alter, that is, when the Helvetic Confederation could be included in a system of Western Allies. There is no doubt that Switzerland could be induced to give up her traditional neutrality as the military and political leaders can hardly envisage the fact that Stalin's Armies will not stop at the Rhine. Apart from all strategic considerations, the highly developed special industries and all other resources are offering to help in incident to the Soviets.

Highly mountainous Switzerland is, on the one hand, a connective link between the Central European highland sloping to the German Lowlands and the Lombard-Venetian plain; on the other hand her eastern frontier forms a bulwark, bulging out approximately 150 km of the Rhine front Basel - Bregenz, blocking this front as well as the Western part of the plane of the R. By this the strategic importance of Switzerland, allied with the Western Powers, is lined out. In case of emergency, Switzerland for herself can but retreat, as provided by the General Staff, into the so-called "Réduit", in the St. Gotthard region. But this would seriously endanger the whole line of defence running from the Saale-Sa. along the Rhine to Basel. Should it however be possible to build up a large Alpine Fortress, consisting of Switzerland, the high mountainous region of Western Austria and South Tyrol with American and British aid, out of which an offensive could be started in the right moment, then probably ^{should} prevent the Russians crossing the Rhine, and as to the defence of pushing forward to the Southern advanced Allied divisions would be threatened from the flank and possibly stopped.

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...tively good (and by far outnumbered by the anti-fascist
fighters for freedom, headed by Andre Mord, defeated the (for
that time) highly developed French Army and so caused for a longer
period a perceptible disturbance to Napoleon's authoritative policy.
The psychological standing of the Frenchman's belief in the
Mont Isel (a hill near Innsbruck) was lowered. It had dropped
their status of inviolability and had become a target of thorough
deliberation against Napoleon. During world war II, the
Alpine Front delayed for a long time the break down of the
"Mitteleuropa", though their deficiency of men and material had
been simply ridiculous. In both cases it was not men who decided
military operations, but the clever utilization of the mountain's
natural difficulties. Owing to this fact, various leaders of Nazi
Germany viewed the possibility to prevent a total break down by
establishing an Alpine Fortress. The question why these plans
had been carried out was, that it was decided when the idea had
been proposed to Hitler, namely, before the already rather old Hitler
time. (Before the battle of Stenches such an idea would have been
thought of as mere delirium in Hitler's eyes. This was apparently
the reason why Mr. Doorman kept his very reasonable plan of the
Alpine Fortress, projected by General Walter Hofer, for several
months, before he handed them to the Führer.) Notwithstanding, a
great deal of these plans could have been prepared in the last
half year before the German break down. Had been great in various
instances. At any rate the internal German opposition against the
continuation of the war under such circumstances had been considerable
and the endeavours to prevent it, had grown very strong. In the end
Hitler's death and the D-Day operation out-tripped all these
plans. It was one of history's grotesques that the Western Allies
(apparently the Americans before all others) had clearly anticipated
and provided for the possibility of the Alpine Fortress,
while Hitler didn't make use of this big chance.

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The St. Iddard region, has been prepared in view of the extreme. A coming war could start under essentially better condition, when it should be possible to build up an impenetrable fortress, comprising a large area, and with the Calais Strait as a center piece, which could serve as head of a bridge, to prevent a Russian drive towards Western Europe. The possibilities for such a project are absolutely existing.

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While Switzerland would be the center-piece of the Alpine Fortress, the Swiss army had to be the basis of military resistance. The excellently organized and disciplined Swiss army will be positively up to this objective, as it is equipped with the most modern weapons and seems to be apparently the best army of Western Europe. Strong volunteer forces from the surrounding areas could be available, no doubt. The Austrian, and eventually the South German mountain troops would have the advantage of being familiar with the country, as well as with the mountain fighting methods. While the Swiss General Staff has apparently now provided in a far degree for a case of emergency, such preparations had to be begun from the start, in the Austrian and North Italian areas. This will not be an easy task, considering prevailing political conditions in these two countries.

On the other hand, it ^{can't} be kept secret indefinitely that German allied authorities are preparing a so called "roll-over-network", for the case of a Russian occupation of these countries. So, preparations of such an objective might be started as well today.

The first step in the preparation to be the creation of a central commanding staff for the respective countries' proposed voluntary formations. This commanding staff might be kept small at first and could deal with the most urgent tasks in collaboration with a corresponding American, and eventually, other Western, occupation authorities. A collaboration with the Swiss General Staff would be productive as it is experienced in the matter. In case of necessity, Switzerland might principally be serving as a basis for all preparatory work, on reasons of camouflage. The principle objectives of this commanding staff would be the following: Inter- & reconnaissance of the Alpine Fortress' main terrain features; detailed planning of the blocking up of passes, roads and bridges, necessary to get the main line of defense; reconnaissance about cover and the possibility to prepare cover for shelter, or storing weapons, munitions, supplies and food supplies. (In the Austrian High Alps there are a very large cover, following a safe shelter for the main line of defense and supply industries) reconnaissance of the main line of defense points of departure for reinforcements, bases for operations, etc.

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(defensive measure) and also to prepare to prevent the dropping
of enemy paratroopers. The building of cover and leveling of the
area might be accomplished and therefore started at once. No positive
provisions ought to be made by the commanding staff.

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The third place would mean the illegal recording of vibrations, the controlled preparation of endorsements and so forth. In this moment, the propaganda must be starting, pointing out the objectives of negative resistance; radio transmitters must be installed, illegal pamphlets and papers must be distributed.

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It should be the first thing to call the volunteers in no time, to bring the volunteers to the scene, the need for blowing up points. Then the resistance will be made known in the public for the first time and the propaganda will set in officially.

It is very difficult to give any figures about the probable strength of available volunteers at the present moment. It will be recommended to form small fighting groups, counting not over 1,000 men. 20 of these voluntary fighting groups should certainly be organized in Austria at the beginning. A multiple of this could be counted with, when recruiting should be extended also to German territory. Special care must be applied to the North Italian

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territories experienced during world war II have shown, that Italian soldiers can't be relied upon very much, though the North Italian mountaineers are not quite so bad. The planned voluntary formation would be only the standing units of a real national army in case of emergency, or just the mountaineers and very able soldiers, fit for the service up to their old age. The famous "Tyrolia Standa, rifle" (Standeschützen) may be quoted as an example. This defensive fight would have quite a particular basis, compared with other warfare, as every man would fight for his wife, children and relations, his homeland, in short, for all he likes. The thought of a civil war will strengthen the fighting morale. The big advantage of such a national warfare is, that the whole civilian population can be fed, but that would be balanced by the above-mentioned circumstances. A large scale provisioning and highest intensification of agriculture (vegetable production, being very much neglected in Austria) would solve these problems.

The present and tactics of world war II may be made available, though many of these common generalizations couldn't be applied to this kind of war. Specialists in partisan warfare in the Belorussia must be consulted from the beginning, to learn how to fight. Motor craft, except, tractors, will be rather useless, but mules and mountain ponies will be needed, the troops must carry their own equipment, many mortars, light anti-aircraft guns, light tank guns and mountain howitzers. The live power of the smallest unit, which is to be equipped with machine pistols and machine guns, must be extremely high. Mortars might be well used in the mountains, troops must be very carefully outfitted, especially with food and good clothing, and guerrillas must be prepared in a large scale, preferably in such a way, as these probably can not be destroyed even with best modern weapons.

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...to prevent the Russian crossing the Rhine, ... get
to fight with in the place. ... of the ... traffic
... could be thrown for this purpose in the
battle field with necessary speed. The ... line, the Belgian
and Dutch frontier fortifications must be restored in time, to look
out all eventualities. A counter-move from Holland against the
Russian north flank could be an efficient completion to the offensive
from the Alpine front. By this, and by all means ... and
providing ... of Russian forces could be prepared. ... a little

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should be said here about the Eastern allies' other needs, military objectives, or offensive operations in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean, aside with stone bombs or rocket weapons. There is a better survey of these matters in the concerned General Staff. The question of a partnership with the Eastern allies in the defense of the Alpine Fortresses, or how much, in case of offensive moves, can be counted with the national volunteer corps, is not a matter of this study. Only thoughts about the opportunity of an Alpine Fortresses ~~had been~~ ^{is} pointed out here. It ~~is~~ ^{is} stated however, that the necessary gathering of capable men could be started at once. A great many specialists, reliable in every way, and able to match any task, are at disposition.

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